2005-2007 Strategic and Business Plan Highlights

The Message From the Legislature:

- Improve Efficiencies
- Deliver More Projects
- Plan for the Future

Aviation is vital to Washington State's transportation system. With its 140 public use airports, the state aviation system plays a crucial role in connecting people to goods and services. It also serves as a critical lifeline to and from rural communities, especially for medical and emergency needs.

Airports fuel Washington's economy by facilitating jobs and commerce. Annually, the aviation system generates 7,600 jobs, $140 million in wages, and $490 million in total sales output.

In spite of its importance to the economy and transportation system, the state aviation system still faces substantial challenges with aging airport pavements, incompatible land uses around airports, the loss of air service in small communities, and new general aviation security issues.

Given limited resources, WSDOT Aviation must strategically focus its energy on activities that most effectively respond to the policy framework established by the Transportation Commission and Legislature.

In 2004, WSDOT's Aviation Advisory Committee challenged WSDOT Aviation to develop a strategic approach to the following questions:

- Are we positioned to respond to a rapidly changing aviation environment?

- Are we using our limited resources effectively and efficiently to meet the state's interest in aviation? What should our key priorities be?

- What strategic changes need to be made to meet the state's aviation policy, i.e., preservation, capacity, safety, and environmental protection?

How was the 2005-2007 Strategic and Business Plan Developed?

WSDOT Aviation's business plan for 2005-2007 was developed in cooperation with the Aviation Advisory Committee to address problems, strategic approaches, legislative priorities, and actions in each of these key areas:

- Airport Capacity and Preservation
- Education and Outreach
- Safety
- Policy and Strategic Planning

WSDOT Aviation Policy Framework

(Adopted 1998, Washington Transportation Commission)

It is in the state's interest that:

- Aviation facilities and services be preserved that provide access for all regions of the state to the nation's air transportation system, provide for emergency management, and support local economies.

- Transportation by air be safe.

- There be sufficient airport capacity to respond to growth in demand to ensure access across the state, the nation, and the world.

- Negative environmental impacts of airports on people and the natural environment be mitigated.

Washington State
Department of Transportation

Aviation

Airport Capacity and Preservation

Problem Statement

Many airport facilities in Washington were constructed over 60 years ago and have significant needs. Specifically, pavement conditions have deteriorated significantly and reconstruction is needed. Other facility needs also exist and need to be addressed to bring the state's airports up to standards. The current funding source for WSDOT Aviation is from aviation fuel taxes; however, 95 percent of aircraft fuel is exempt from taxes. Even when combined with federal funds, these taxes do not adequately address the long-term needs of the aviation system.

Strategic Approach

- Strive to maintain serviceability and fairness of current public investments in the aviation system, taking into account different classes of airports.
- Maximize value and impact of public investment in the aviation system statewide.
- Meet priority needs of the aviation system, as identified in the Aviation System Strategic Plan, while continuing to support needs of local airports through alternative funding sources.
- Support state security priorities.

Actions

- Implement new legislation calling for more airport paving.
- Improve tax collection efficiency.
- Leverage federal funds for airport aid.
- Develop strategic ACIP methodology and prioritized list of grant projects.
- Expedite grant agreement delivery, construction timelines, and project closeouts.
- Develop new grant agreement form for Local Airport Aid (including new grant assurances).
- Prepare online grant application.
- Expand security grant program.
- Develop a scoring process to discourage construction project overruns.

Measurements

- Develop ACIP no later than the end of the 2nd Quarter, FY 2006.
- Announce State Airport Aid Grant awards no later than July 30, 2005 and April 30, 2006.
- Issue all 05-06 and 06-07 grant agreements no later than 30 days after award announcement.
- Require quarterly reports from grant recipients to ensure on-time and on-budget construction projects.
- Reduce the number of construction schedule overruns by 10 percent.
- Ensure at least 85 percent of all final inspections occur within 30 days of invoicing.
- Implement online grant application by March 2006.
- Make new grant agreements available to airport sponsors for the April 2006 grant awards.
- 2006 DBE plan shall be approved by the FAA no later than end of 2nd Quarter FY 2006.
- Improve average system-wide pavement condition index by 5 points.
- Improve grant closeout by 10 percent at the end of the biennium.

Policy and Strategic Planning

Problem Statement

Washington State's air transportation network is comprised of a complex and dynamic system of airports. This challenges WSDOT Aviation to strategically evaluate the current infrastructure and plan for long-term aviation system needs. The process must involve integrating emerging technologies and improving efficiencies across all modes of transportation. It will also guide investment decisions for future generations.

Strategic Approach

Anticipate and strategically respond to emerging aviation system trends and issues. Increase consistency between FAA and State of Washington in interpreting and complying with local aviation policies, rules, and regulations by class of airport. Recognize that different types of airports have different regulatory and policy needs.

Actions

- Complete airport classification system and establish performance measures.
- Implement new legislation to determine long-term air transportation needs.
- Complete aviation component and multi-modal integration for WTP.
- Continue technical assistance for the airport land use compatibility program.
- Continue evaluation of comprehensive plans and regulations for airport land use compatibility program.
- Monitor compliance with airport land use compatibility program.
- Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions for policy and regulation.
- Review process for evaluating height hazards.
- Revise Land Use Guidelines based on survey results.
- Develop storm water and critical areas manual for airports.
- Complete pavement maintenance study.
- Continue as advocate for aviation research.
- Partner with Oregon Aeronautics on DOT air service grant.
- Develop standard airport operating agreements with federal agencies.
- Implement policy for through-the-fence agreement.
- Develop consistent policies and standards for all state airports.
- Continue leadership role in developing national land use policy.

Measurements

- Submit applications to local jurisdictions to address land use compatibility for state airports (2 state airports in 2005, 3 in 2006, and 3 in 2007).
- Complete airport classification and performance standards by December 2005.
- Complete air transportation and facility assessment by July 2006.
- Complete market analysis and assessment by July 2007.
- Complete multiple ALP program for all NPIAS airports.
- Complete multiple ALP program for five non-NPIAS airports.
- Increase airports protected as essential public facilities in adopted comprehensive plans by 5 percent.
- Submit two aviation research projects to TRB.
- Implement standards at two state airports.

2005-07 Strategic and Business Plan Highlights

Public Outreach and Education

Problem Statement

Public outreach and education are increasingly important as a means of informing the public about the benefits of aviation to the state. Airport preservation is one of the most critical issues facing the aviation system and has been identified as a primary role for WSDOT Aviation. WSDOT will also provide education resources where gaps exist for the users and operators of the aviation system to enhance safety. As the needs change the role of WSDOT Aviation in public outreach and education will evolve to address the most important unmet needs with greatest overall impact.

Strategic Approach

- State education and outreach activities should be directly related to Washington's aviation interest or need. WSDOT Aviation should lead in shaping a common vision for aviation education and careers in enhancing public awareness of the value of aviation to Washington State.
- The state should ensure that airport managers and sponsors have the education tools they need to effectively preserve and maintain the state's airports.
- The state should also continue outreach with local jurisdictions to enhance airports and their utilization.

Actions

- Identify long-term education priorities and strategies through the aviation advisory group.
- Continue outreach to airport sponsors.
- Continue outreach to local jurisdictions and airports on land use compatibility.
- Develop airport management and land use presentation seminars.
- Continue web site updates to reflect department functions and program goals.
- Revise laws and regulations handbook and update on web page.
- Revise Seaplane Directory.
- Investigate sponsors for pilot and mechanic clinics.
- Complete training to update aviation web page in-house.
- Publish quarterly and annual report for customers.
- Update Information Clearinghouse monthly.
- Continue outreach to Northwest states.
- Participate as sponsor of at least one special event per year.
- Continue leadership role with NASAO and TRB to develop national aviation policy.

Measurements

- Attend at least 10 airport public meetings.
- Conduct at least five land use workshops per year.
- Update Aviation Clearinghouse data monthly.
- Conduct annual survey of services provided to customers.
- Continue as NASAO Director, Northwest Mountain Region.
- Provide two airport management seminars per year.
- Develop a Community Outreach Airport Toolkit.
- Participate in Airport Appreciation Days at five airports per year.
- Host one teachers' conference per year on aviation education.
- Partner with AOPA to provide Pilot Instructor Clinics.
- Continue to routinely update resources on the Aviation Education Clearinghouse web page.

Safety

Problem Statement

Washington State's Aviation Policy indicates that it is in state's interest that air transportations is safe. WSDOT Aviation supports this position by providing the necessary resources to assist airports in maintaining safe facilities. The state also operates emergency airfields, provide pilot services, and conduct air search and rescue missions.
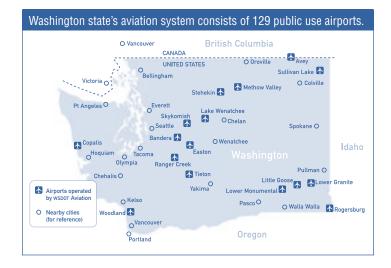
Strategic Approach

Maintain WSDOT Aviation's leadership role in Aviation Emergency Services and Air Search and Rescue. Work diligently to improve program efficiency, while continuing to explore ways to achieve funding stability and a more cost-effective administrative framework. Continue to provide training for air search and rescue pilot volunteers.

Actions

- Implement new membership procedures/requirements for volunteers.
- Utilize new mobile Incident Command Post to improve operational efficiency.
- Select Regional Coordinators for Emergency Services Districts.
- Develop guidelines for deploying resources.
- Increase participation of airports in security grant program.
- Increase participation of airports in runway safety program.
- Expand airport web camera program.
- Extend year round season for state airports, when possible.
- Research new technology and methods to measure airport activity.
- Implement ACIPs to address airport safety.

Measurements

- Improve response times for missions by 10 percent.
- Improve SAR aircraft utilization for more efficiency by 10 percent.
- Increase documentation compliance by 50 percent.
- Reduce false ELT hits by 10 percent.
- Conduct survey of state GA security programs.
- Expand security program participation by 10 airports.
- Expand runway safety program participation by 10 airports.
- Measure airport activity at one state-operated airport.
- Allocate a minimum of 20 percent of airport grants to safety.

Washington state's aviation system consists of 129 public use airports.

WSDOT Aviation

Airports are critical links in the Washington State Transportation System. WSDOT Aviation's mission is to promote the integration of aviation into the Washington State Transportation System to meet the increasing demand for public transportation. WSDOT Aviation is charged with advancing the state's aviation interest in four critical areas: preservation, capacity, safety, and the environment. State Policy Direction in each of these critical areas is accomplished by a variety of WSDOT Aviation programs.

Aviation Management and Support

Provides oversight for all state governmental aviation activities, enforcement of aviation laws in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and coordination of aviation efforts under the Growth Management Act. Provides information on air transportation issues to governmental agencies and the public. Registers general aviation aircraft and resident pilots, licenses aircraft dealers in Washington, and inspects local public use airports.

Local Airport Aid

Provides state grants and technical assistance to municipalities for construction, improvement, and repair of local public use airports. Projects include lighting, runway paving, resurfacing, visual aids, crack sealing, and painting.

State Airport Program

Provides funding for preservation, maintenance, and improvements to the state-owned or operated airports, which are primarily maintained for emergency purposes.

Air Search and Rescue

Provides coordination and participates in aviation search and rescue missions. Offers education to maintain an effective volunteer search and rescue force and provide search and accident prevention information to Washington pilots.

Aviation Planning

Identifies the characteristics and needs of Washington's system of airports, including system inventory, forecasting, economic analyses, pavement management, land use compatibility, capacity needs, navigational improvements, and capital needs. Maintains physical inventory of airports, adjacent land uses, inter-modal connections, cargo and air carrier movements; jobs, wages, and sales output assessments; rural airport economic analysis; based aircraft and operations forecasts; and pavement conditions. Recommends maintenance plans for the 130 public use airports in Washington.

An Evolving Aviation System

Aviation in Washington began as a mix of self-help and pioneer spirit. State government entered into airport activities in 1919, slightly over 15 years after Wilbur and Orville Wright flew the first plane at Kitty Hawk.

In 1947, the Washington State Department of Transportation established the "Aeronautics Commission" to facilitate the development of an adequate system of public use airports, promote aviation safety, and airmark towns and cities. It was not until 1970 that Washington's first State Airport System Plan was completed. As our communities and the complexity of our economies have grown, the state has played an increasingly important role in protecting the capacity and enhancing the safety of our airways.

Today, our State Airport System Plan is an interdependent system of 129 public use airports serving over 30 million passengers each year.

**Washington State
Department of Transportation**